

December, 18, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) welcomed Deputy Secretary of Commerce Dennis Hightower to the City of Cortland to announce that New York State, Pennsylvania and Vermont will be receiving \$39,724,614 in Recovery Bill funding to install broadband across the three states in rural communities to promote economic development and connect these rural areas with the global community, while creating local jobs. In Cortland, Arcuri co-hosted a roundtable discussion with Deputy Secretary Hightower regarding economic development and broadband access with local business and government leaders.

"Broadband access is critical to revitalizing the economy in our rural and post-industrial cities across Upstate New York," **Arcuri said**. "From extending tele-medicine services to rural communities to ensuring our nation's children are equipped with the skills they need to compete in the global economy. For example, a wonderful hospital like Cortland Memorial will be able to communicate more efficiently with their patients in rural areas now that those patients will have access to broadband rather than being forced to drive the long distances to and from the hospital for what can be considered a routine visit. There are actually some areas in Cortland County that do not have any access to cable TV service and broadband services have the ability to connect them to what they need."

"Expanding access to broadband technology in upstate New York is essential to build a better future in a high-tech world; it will create jobs, economic opportunity and educational advancement, innovation and more," **Schumer said**. "Universal high speed internet access is critical to rebuilding rural economies, like those in Upstate New York, as wireless networks enable entrepreneurship to flourish and attract new types of cutting-edge, high-tech business. With this grant from the Economic Recovery Act we will be able to provide expanded access to broadband for underserved areas throughout Upstate New York to help grow their local economies."

"To compete and succeed in the 21st century economy, we need to expand broadband to every corner of New York," **Gillibrand said**. "These federal investments in broadband will help connect rural families and businesses to the rest of the world with high-speed Internet, help more businesses reach new markets, give our students the education they need to succeed and help rebuild our economy. I will continue working with Senator Schumer to make sure New York gets its fair share from the federal government."

Albany-based telecommunications company ION was selected by the Department of Commerce to oversee the broadband installation project. The ION Upstate New York Rural Broadband Initiative proposes to build 10 new segments of fiber-optic, middle mile broadband infrastructure, serving more than 70 rural communities in upstate New York and parts of Pennsylvania and Vermont. The ION project plans to construct a 1,308-mile network to serve more than 300 anchor institutions and immediately connect more than 100, including libraries, state and community colleges, state and county agencies, and health clinics. ION plans to extend its relationship with Basset Hospital and Healthcare System, to expand many of its telemedicine practices.

The project would enable wired and wireless service providers to make broadband more readily available to 250,000 households and 38,000 businesses, and provide much-needed investments and job creation to unserved and underserved areas of the state. The project proposes to provide broadband education, training, equipment, and support to educational and healthcare entities and other community support organizations.

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